

# NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS GRAZING CAMPAIGN

## Overview of the Benefits of the Multiple-Use Conflict Resolution Act

### Ecological Restoration of Public Lands

Removing domestic livestock from federal public lands will assist the recovery of threatened and endangered species;<sup>1</sup> improve water quality and quantity;<sup>2</sup> increase big game on public lands, including elk, deer, bighorn sheep, bison and pronghorn;<sup>3</sup> promote recovery of western riparian areas;<sup>4</sup> improve forest health;<sup>5</sup> aid restoration of natural fire regimes;<sup>6</sup> increase biological diversity, especially bird species;<sup>7</sup> reduce soil erosion;<sup>8</sup> and stem the spread of invasive weeds.<sup>9</sup>

### Financial Freedom for Public Lands Grazing Permittees/Lessees

An increasing number of federal grazing permittees are facing tough times. Foreign beef imports, domestic competition, export restrictions, drought, Mad Cow disease, and recreational and environmental conflicts have all conspired to make livestock grazing untenable on some public lands. Some permittees have sizeable debt. Many permittees do not have children who are willing or able to come back to take over the family ranch.<sup>10</sup>

The Multiple-Use Conflict Resolution Act (MUCRA, H.R. 3166) proposes paying federal grazing permittees/lessees to voluntarily retire their permits/leases at a rate of \$175/animal unit month<sup>11</sup> — well above the average capital value of most federal grazing permits and leases.<sup>12</sup> With this generous payment, permittees/lessees could convert their ranches to exclusively private lands operations (without federal overseers); payoff the bank; retire, without having to sell or subdivide their ranch base property; convert their ranch to another business (hunting/fishing lodge/guide service; birding outpost; bed-and-breakfast; dude ranch); and/or leave a cash legacy for their loved ones.<sup>13</sup>

### Re-capitalization of the Rural American West

As permittees/lessees opt for buyout and invest their federal compensation in new economic opportunities, their communities will benefit from the new income, increased taxes and new jobs. Studies have indicated, and as former permittees/lessees will discover, there is greater economic value in non-consumptive uses of federal public lands (hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, guiding, camping, horseback riding) than livestock grazing.

### Taxpayer Savings

Given the roughly \$200 million annual subsidy for the federal grazing program,<sup>14</sup> the simple payback to taxpayers for compensating ranchers under MUCRA is as short as 17 years.<sup>15</sup> The legislation offers a return on investment for the taxpayers of almost six percent annually, and has a benefit-cost ratio of over 1.57:1, or \$1.57 saved for every dollar spent.<sup>16</sup>

### Resolution of Social, Legal and Public Lands Management Conflicts

MUCRA would resolve livestock grazing conflicts in a fair and equitable manner. As livestock are removed from public lands, litigation over grazing conflicts with wildlife, watersheds, and recreation will decrease.<sup>17</sup> Both the removal of livestock and the subsequent reduction in environmental litigation will free up agency resources from developing grazing plans, defending against lawsuits, processing endless paperwork, and responding to public protests over grazing abuse.<sup>18</sup> Fewer livestock on public lands will also result in fewer new species listings and speed recovery of species already listed under the Endangered Species Act.<sup>19</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> NPLGC. "Grazing Impacts on Threatened and Endangered Species" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_Cows\\_v\\_Endangered\\_Species.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_Cows_v_Endangered_Species.PDF).
- <sup>2</sup> NPLGC. "Livestock and Water" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_Cows\\_v\\_Water.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_Cows_v_Water.PDF); G. Wuerthner. 2002. Guzzling the West's Water: Squandering a Public Resource at Public Expense. Pages 195-197 *in* G. Wuerthner and M. Matteson (eds.). WELFARE RANCHING: THE SUBSIDIZED DESTRUCTION OF THE AMERICAN WEST. Island Press. Covelo, CA (available at [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/wr\\_Guzzling\\_Water.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/wr_Guzzling_Water.PDF)).
- <sup>3</sup> NPLGC. "Livestock versus Wildlife" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/FS\\_Cows\\_v\\_Wildlife.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/FS_Cows_v_Wildlife.PDF).
- <sup>4</sup> NPLGC. "Livestock and Water" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_Cows\\_v\\_Water.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_Cows_v_Water.PDF); J. Boone Kauffman. 2002. Lifeblood of the West: Riparian Zones, Biodiversity, and Degradation by Livestock. Pages 175-176 *in* G. Wuerthner and M. Matteson (eds.). WELFARE RANCHING: THE SUBSIDIZED DESTRUCTION OF THE AMERICAN WEST. Island Press. Covelo, CA; A. J. Belsky, A. Matzke, S. Uselman. 2002. What the River Once Was: Livestock Destruction of Waters and Wetlands. Pages 179-182 *in* G. Wuerthner and M. Matteson (eds.). WELFARE RANCHING: THE SUBSIDIZED DESTRUCTION OF THE AMERICAN WEST. Island Press. Covelo, CA; S. Fouty. 2002. Cattle and Streams: Piecing Together a Story of Change. Pages 185-187 *in* G. Wuerthner and M. Matteson (eds.). WELFARE RANCHING: THE SUBSIDIZED DESTRUCTION OF THE AMERICAN WEST. Island Press. Covelo, CA.
- <sup>5</sup> NPLGC. "Livestock Major Factor in Unhealthy Forests," [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/cows\\_and\\_forests.htm](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/cows_and_forests.htm).
- <sup>6</sup> NPLGC. "Livestock Grazing's Contribution to Fire Hazard," [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/cows\\_and\\_fire.htm](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/cows_and_fire.htm).
- <sup>7</sup> NPLGC. "Livestock Grazing: Impact on Birds," [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/cows\\_and\\_birds.htm](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/cows_and_birds.htm).
- <sup>8</sup> Wuerthner, G. 2002. The Soil's Living Surface: Biological Crusts. Pages 199-200 *in* G. Wuerthner and M. Matteson (eds.). WELFARE RANCHING: THE SUBSIDIZED DESTRUCTION OF THE AMERICAN WEST. Island Press. Covelo, CA.
- <sup>9</sup> NPLGC. "Livestock and Alien Weeds" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/cows\\_and\\_weeds.htm](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/cows_and_weeds.htm); A. J. Belsky and J. L. Gelbard. 2000. Livestock Grazing and Weed Invasions in the Arid West (white paper). Oregon Natural Desert Association. Bend, OR (available at [www.onda.org/library/papers/WeedReport.pdf](http://www.onda.org/library/papers/WeedReport.pdf)).
- <sup>10</sup> NPLGC. "Social Aspects of Public Lands Livestock Grazing" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_Social\\_Aspects.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_Social_Aspects.PDF).
- <sup>11</sup> NPLGC. Multiple-Use Conflict Resolution Act *Annotated*' (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_MUCRA\\_Annotated.pdf](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_MUCRA_Annotated.pdf).
- <sup>12</sup> NPLGC. "Federal Livestock Grazing AUMs: B(u)y the Numbers" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_Buy\\_the\\_Numbers.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_Buy_the_Numbers.PDF).
- <sup>13</sup> NPLGC. "Economic Benefits of the Multiple-Use Conflict Resolution Act" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_Economic\\_Benefits.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_Economic_Benefits.PDF).
- <sup>14</sup> NPLGC. "The Cost of the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Livestock Grazing Programs" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_Fiscal\\_Costs.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_Fiscal_Costs.PDF).
- <sup>15</sup> NPLGC. "Fiscal Benefits to Taxpayers of the Multiple-Use Conflict Resolution Act" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_Fiscal\\_Benefits.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_Fiscal_Benefits.PDF).
- <sup>16</sup> NPLGC. "Fiscal Benefits to Taxpayers of the Multiple-Use Conflict Resolution Act" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_Fiscal\\_Benefits.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_Fiscal_Benefits.PDF).
- <sup>17</sup> NPLGC. "Social Benefits of the Multiple-Use Conflict Resolution Act" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_Social\\_Benefits.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_Social_Benefits.PDF).
- <sup>18</sup> NPLGC. "Social Benefits of the Multiple-Use Conflict Resolution Act" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_Social\\_Benefits.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_Social_Benefits.PDF); NPLGC. "The Limited Role of Federal Land Management Agencies in the Multiple-Use Conflict Resolution Act" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_No\\_Agency\\_Involvement.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_No_Agency_Involvement.PDF).
- <sup>19</sup> NPLGC. "Social Benefits of the Multiple-Use Conflict Resolution Act" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_Social\\_Benefits.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_Social_Benefits.PDF); NPLGC. "Grazing Impacts on Threatened and Endangered Species" (factsheet), [www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS\\_Cows\\_v\\_Endangered\\_Species.PDF](http://www.publiclandsranching.org/htmlres/PDF/FS_Cows_v_Endangered_Species.PDF).